metro
NEW YORK CITY NO. 1 FREE DAILY IN THE U
Thursday, March 1, 2018 metro.us | t: MetroNewYork | f: MetroNewYork

BALLETNEXT
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHELE WILES
4 WORLD PREMIERES!
Photo: Nisian Hughes
MARCH 6–10, 2018
NEW YORK LIVE ARTS

IT'S ROBBIN' SEASON

In the second season of 'Atlanta,' the struggle is (sur)real. 14-15

Smorgasburg at East River State Park returns. 18

Lower East Side to get a ferry dock. 4

Mets' deGrom looks to return from back injury before Opening Day. 23

GETTY IMAGES

BOWING TO BOWIE

The exhibition 'David Bowie Is' opens at the Brooklyn Museum on Friday, with tickets going for as much as $2,500. Bowie's longtime friend and producer explains why fans must check it out. 6-7

A weekend in London is as amazing as it is achievable. 20

WELCOME TO METRO.US

RACHAEL VAUGHAN CLEMMONS

"Atlanta" is a very special show, and tonight, its second season premieres. And since we're hashtag thankful that stories about and by black people are going mainstream again, we're telling you everything you need to know about the surreal series on pages 14-15. Read more at **metro.us/entertainment.**

WH: TOP PRESIDENTIAL AIDE HOPE HICKS RESIGNS

Hope Hicks, one of President Donald Trump's longest-serving, most trusted aides, is resigning from her job as White House communications director. The White House announced she was leaving a day after Hicks, 29, spent nine hours in a closed hearing of the House Intelligence Committee on its investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election. White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said Hicks' decision to leave was not related to her appearance before the panel. Hicks' exact departure date was unclear but is expected to be sometime over the next few weeks. A one-time aide to Trump's daughter, Ivanka Trump, and with no previous experience in politics, Hicks was one of the first people hired by the then-New York businessman when he began his campaign for the presidency.

TRUMP PUSHES CONGRESS FOR BROAD BILL ON GUNS

President Donald Trump on Wednesday went his furthest yet toward endorsing restrictions on gun sales, challenging lawmakers to go big on legislation to help prevent school shootings. During a freewheeling hourlong discussion, Trump spoke approvingly of several ideas opposed by the powerful National Rifle Association gun lobby, which endorsed his 2016 candidacy, including raising the legal age to buy rifles to 21 from 18, and proposals to expand background checks for gun buyers. "I will sign it," Trump said as he urged the group of lawmakers — some favoring more gun restrictions, others averse to gun control — to avoid tailored attempts to fix holes in gun laws and embrace a comprehensive fix. Trump had been considering changes in gun laws since a gunman killed 17 people at a high school in Florida on Feb. 14.

RELIGIOUS GROUP HOLDS BLESSING CEREMONY FOR AR-15 RIFLES

3 A woman holds an AR-15 rifle during a ceremony at the World Peace and Unification Sanctuary on Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2018, in Newfoundland, Pennsylvania. The church believes the AR-15 symbolizes the "rod of iron" in the biblical book of Revelation, and it encouraged couples to bring the weapons to a "commitment ceremony."

GETTY IMAGES

US OLYMPIC COMMITTEE CHIEF STEPS DOWN

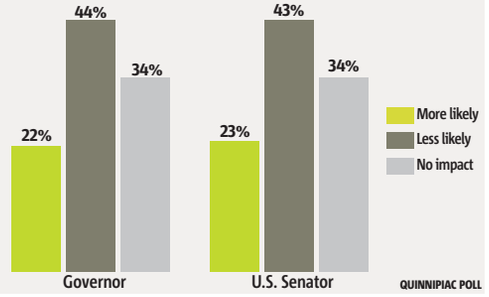
4 U.S. Olympic Committee Chief Executive Scott Blackmun is resigning for medical reasons, the organization said on Wednesday, following months of sustained criticism stemming from the sex abuse scandal involving former USA Gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar. In a statement, the USOC cited Blackmun's "ongoing health issues" related to prostate cancer, for which he has been receiving treatment. As part of the same press release, the group also outlined new reforms aimed at protecting its athletes from abuse. The Colorado Springs, Colorado-based USOC had resisted calls to fire Blackmun over the Nassar case. Blackmun, 60, did not attend the recent Winter Olympics. The scandal prompted the entire board of directors at USA Gymnastics to resign. It also spawned lawsuits and criminal and civil investigations.

MUELLER INVESTIGATING ATTACKS ON AG SESSIONS

5 The special counsel in the Russia probe is investigating a period of time last summer when President Donald Trump seemed determined to push Attorney General Jeff Sessions to resign, the Washington Post reported on Wednesday. Special Counsel Robert Mueller is looking into whether Trump's apparent effort was part of a pattern of attempted obstruction of justice, the Post said, citing people familiar with the matter. Mueller's team, which is investigating alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, has questioned witnesses about Trump's private comments around the time he issued a series of tweets belittling Sessions, according to the Post. Mueller is seeking to determine whether Trump's goal was to oust Sessions in order to pick a replacement who would exercise control over the Russia investigation, the Post said.

TRUMP SUPPORTERS

If a candidate for governor or the U.S. Senate supports President Trump, does that make you more likely to vote for him or her?



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St Luke's School
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Stephen Wise Free Synagogue Early Childhood Center
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The Brownstone School
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The Choir School of Saint Thomas Church
The Church of the Epiphany Day School
The Churchill School and Center
The Convent of the Sacred Heart School of New York
The Dalton School
The Elisabeth Morrow School
The Elizabeth Seton Pre-School
The Episcopal School in the City of New York
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The Family School / Family School West
The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York /
First Presbyterian Church Nursery School
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The Hewitt School
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The Mandell School
The Masters School
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The Nightingale-Bamford School
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Member schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin in administration of their educational policies, admissions policies, scholarships and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

ISAAGNY is a non-profit association of early childhood and ongoing schools that grew out of the need to clarify the process of applying to independent schools and make the transition between schools easier for applicants and their families.

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Starting this summer, The NYC Ferry service will have a new landing on the Lower East Side. **NIKKI M. MASCALI / METRO**

NYC Ferry coming to Lower East Side in the summer

Mayor Bill de Blasio announced two new expansions to the NYC Ferry service, on the Lower East Side and in the South Bronx.

KRISTIN TOUSSAINT
kristin.toussaint@metro.us

This summer, you'll be able to catch an NYC Ferry from the Lower East Side.

Mayor Bill de Blasio announced on Wednesday the start of construction for a new NYC Ferry landing on the Lower East Side, which he said will be open by the summer of 2018.

The mayor also announced another ferry route that will service the South Bronx, expected to be completed by this summer as well.

"Here's a community on the Lower East Side that for a long time has not had enough ways to get around," de Blasio said at a press conference Wednesday morning in Corlears Hook. "One of the central ideas of the NYC Ferry was to open up opportunity, to connect people to jobs, connect people to education, to give them a chance to get around their own city in ways they just don't have right now, and this is a great example of what we're doing here on the Lower East Side."

The new method of transportation will provide Lower East Side residents with a nine-minute ferry ride to Wall Street and a 17-minute ride to Midtown, compared with a 13-minute walk just to the nearest subway station, officials said.

The city expects the Lower East Side route to serve one million riders each year, reducing travel times for many — especially the nearly 8,000 families who live in nearby NYCHA developments. The South Bronx route is expected to serve about 400,000 riders.

The city is building four docks in total for these two new routes: at Corlears Hook, East 90th Street, and Stuyvesant Cove on the East River, and at Clason Point Park in Soundview Section of the Bronx.

"People in this city understand that if you don't have a way to get around, if everything you try to do takes too much time, it just robs you of opportunity," de Blasio said. "It certainly robs you of the time you need to spend with your family and take care of everything else in life. We want to constantly make it easier and faster for New Yorkers to get around."

Since its launch in May 2017, NYC Ferry has had almost three million riders, nearly 800,000 more than officials originally projected.

The ferry service is part of the de Blasio administration's efforts to make New York City "the fairest big city in America," he said.

"Our streets are too congested, our highways are too congested, our subways too crowded — we need more alternatives," de Blasio said. "You can't operate in the modern world if there isn't mass transit."

"Our streets are too congested, our highways are too congested, our subways too crowded — we need more alternatives."

Mayor Bill de Blasio

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The Archer, Station to Station tour, 1976. JOHN ROBERT ROWLANDS

The essential David Bowie arrives in NYC

The artist's longtime friend and producer Tony Visconti tells us why the Brooklyn Museum's new exhibit is a must for all fans.

LINDA LABAN
letters@metro.us

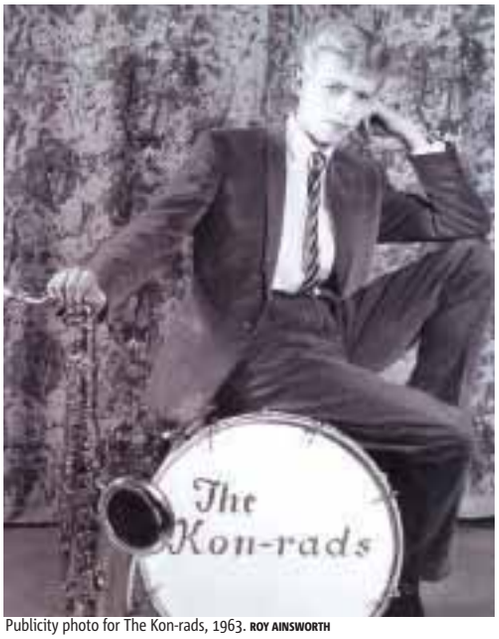
When the massive "David Bowie Is" retrospective art show opened in London in 2013, he was still alive and would release two more albums, "The Next Day" and "Blackstar," the latter dropping days before his death in Manhattan in January 2016.

When the exhibit, curated by London's Victoria and Albert Museum, makes its final stop on a five-year world tour at the Brooklyn Museum this month, Bowie's immense legacy will be portrayed from beginning to end. Just like the man himself, "David Bowie Is" adapted along the way and includes artifacts highlighting his ties to America and New York, and some from his final masterwork. A whole, unimaginably vast, life is on view.

"You need about a week to see it, it's so huge," said Bowie's friend and producer Tony Visconti. "It's a tribute to his legacy: a 50-year career. It was a huge undertaking."

Visconti, who grew up in Bensonhurst and lives in Brooklyn, met Bowie in London in 1967 and went on to record 14 albums with him, including the magnificent finale.

"David wasn't involved in putting together the exhibit, but he allowed his collection to be used. We were making 'The Next Day' at the time. He knew these were the best curators who understood the value of these items. He saw it after it opened and it overwhelmed him. He just looked up; he didn't have the



Publicity photo for The Kon-rads, 1963. ROY AINSWORTH

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Asymmetric knitted bodysuit by Kansai Yamamoto for the Aladdin Sane tour, 1973. THE DAVID BOWIE ARCHIVE

Lyrics for "Ziggy Stardust" by David Bowie, 1972. THE DAVID BOWIE ARCHIVE

David Bowie, 1973. MASAYOSHI SUKITA

If you go

David Bowie Is
March 2-July 15
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words."

It's not surprising that even Bowie himself would be overwhelmed by what he's meant to the creative world over his career. There's music, from pop to avant-garde jazz; acting, both stage and screen; and performance and visual art. And, of course, those famous costumes for Ziggy Stardust, Aladdin Sane and the Thin White Duke.

"He considered himself an actor. When he was Ziggy, he was David Jones acting as Ziggy. He would go into character," said Visconti.

"He was truly eclectic and constantly searching. He was very well informed, very well read. He was always exploring other things and using it. Once, he was reading a book on rare china. Who reads about china tea sets? He had an inquisitive mind."

Exploration was essential to Bowie: "He was a true Renaissance man. He was a painter himself. I just learned he also designed wallpaper," said Visconti. "This is the first time it will be shown."

But music turned out to be his most powerful tool. "He always said you could find out anything about him through his music and his lyrics. This exhibit will have plenty of … what do they call them? Easter eggs. People will be analyzing his lyrics to decades to come."

Bowie challenged not only musical and artistic boundaries, often drawing vehement negative criticism, but also gender and societal ones. The term "gender benders" came up during the glam rock era in Britain, a movement he rose to dominate and transcend.

Visconti said the exhibit is a galvanizing experience: "I went with my friend Marc Almond of Soft Cell and he left after 45 minutes. It was just too emotional for him.

"For some fans, their whole life is David Bowie; he was their god. He was larger than life. He liberated millions of people."

Migraine Sufferers - Are you sick of he

Finally - A Doctor Who Und

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Caring Approach

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Much Worse

And the most frustrating part is… unless someone has this crippling condition… *they simply cannot understand what you are going through.*

No matter how much they say…. "I know how you feel"… *they just don't.*

You know what I mean... right?

This includes doctors

It's so disheartening how uncaring some doctors can seem simply because they just don't understand how bad the pain is.

And how devastating this condition is to your life.

So let me ask you this...

How frustrating... even infuriating is that?

Seriously... that should never happen.

Is it because they don't care... or... maybe they have just become desensitized because they are around this horrible condition so much.

Who knows.

Here is something I do know:

While Dr. Sorokin, MD does not suffer from migraine or severe headaches himself… he has treated hundreds of patients with the condition.

And even though he has gotten excellent results with so many… what he is most proud of is how each and every patient knows how much he cares about them and will always puts their needs first doing what's best for them.

Here is something you must know before we go any further…

There is no cure for migraine headaches.

Sure… there are a ton of "wonder cures" out there.

Theses overnight miracles are often being sold by unethical marketers praying on the fact that you are in severe pain… and so desperate you are willing to try almost anything.

Shame on these people

The truth of the matter is…

There are no 100% success rates for anything in medicine. This is because every patients is individual… so every case is individual and unique.

Therefore, no ethical doctor would eve guarantee you results.

Or even promise you any particular result what-so-ever.

If you are looking for a miracle overnight cure… this is NOT for you.

But if you are looking for real medical treatments performed by qualified doctors that have a good chance to help you… this will be the most important information you ever discover.

Here is why:

After treating hundreds of migraine headache sufferers… *NYC Pain MD* and Dr. Sorokin have put together a treatment system that has had tremendous success for many.

One of the biggest reasons is because Dr. Sorokin uses advanced medical treatments customized to each patient often in combination. There is no standardized program as each case is unique.

We will tell you more about how these treatments can help you in just a moment… but first you should know this…

While *NYC Pain MD* And Dr. Sorokin cannot promise this program will not work for you… if if does… it can relieve some or much of your pain.

Imagine how wonderful to finally relieve some or possibly most of the throbbing, pulsating pain. Or due away with some of the sensitivity to light, nausea, vomiting. The dull ache or neck pain and fatigue that 'hangs over' after the headache.

How would it feel to finally be able to sleep all night without the pain? Or awaken without the fear of another headache ruining your day.

And do all the things you want and love to do again... without the pain.

Sounds to good to be true?

I'm sure it does.

I'm also sure you have heard big promises only to be let down before.

That's why we are not asking you to believe us right now.

We're only asking you to give us the opportunity to show you exactly what we can possibly do for you.

And then you can make an educated decision.

That's why *NYC Pain MD and* Dr. Sorokin are offering a free screening that gives you all the information you need to now about these advanced medical treatments for migraine and severe headaches… and their complete treatment program.

Your free screening will also give you the opportunity to discuss your case with Dr. Sorokin… and see if you qualify for treatment.

This is a great opportunity to get all your questions answered and find out what your best options are.

All you have to do is call 800-986-4868 and tell whoever answers the phone you want your free migraine screening. They will know what this is all about and get you scheduled for the next spot that fits into your schedule.

If you are on the fence please consider this:

This screening is completely free with no obligation.

You will not be getting a "sales pitch."

You will simply be getting great information on some of the best possible medical treatments for migraine headaches and the opportunity to see if you quality for any of them.

And if we can't help you... we will tell you and give a recommendation as to what we think you should do next.

The down side is ZERO

You have nothing to lose. What you stand to gain is a chance to finally relieve your migraine pain and get your life back.

As soon as you call and schedule your free screening you will breathe a big sigh of relief knowing you are doing everything you can and giving yourself the best possible chance to beat this brutal condition that has stolen your life.

Why You Should Do This Now

As you can imagine, these screenings fill up fast. If you do not call in time to get one this month, you will have to wait and be scheduled for the first available time next month. But we will do our best to get you in as soon as possible.

aring: "You just have a bad headache"

erstands Migraine Sufferers

fferer Should Know About This Doctor's n and Treatments

Advanced Treatment At NYC Pain MD Offers New Hope For Migraine Sufferers In Tri-State Area

Are there treatments available that actually help migraine and severe headache pain? *NYC Pain MD* & Dr. Sorokin have been swarmed with migraine and headache sufferers looking for relief due with their advanced headache treatment program.

The Secret To Success With Migraines?

Besides having the most advanced treatments available... One of the biggest secrets to success is treating each patient as an individual. Actually LISTENING to you... doing the proper evaluation.. and then giving you the treatment or treatments that are right for YOU.

Dr. Sorokin will look at your individual case and see if you qualify for treatments.

Sometimes one treatment is best for you... other times he will explain how more than one treatment used in combination can get the best results for you.

And if you don't qualify for treatment... Dr. Sorokin will give you the best advice possible and tell you what all your options are.

So there really is no "secret." Just practicing great medicine and caring about each and every patient. To see if you qualify just call: **800-986-4868**

This screening is at no cost and no obligation. You will leave knowing if one of our treatments are right for you and if it might get you the relief you are looking for.

Call 800-986-4868 if you would like to see if we can help you like we have already helped countless others just like you.

What Results Can Be Expected?

Like all medical treatments, the results vary and can not be predicted. But many migraine and headache sufferers get dramatic results. It is not uncommon for patients to tell us they are pain free for the first time in years.

Who Should Try This Treatment?

Not everyone is a candidate for these programs.. But if you your are, there is a good chance you may relieve some... or much of your pain.

You are a potential candidate for one of our treatments if you have been diagnosed with migraine headaches and have symptoms like severe throbbing or pulsing pain... especially on one side of your head. And if the pain is sometime accompanied by nausea, vomiting and sensitivity to light and sound. Or neck pain with fatigue or pain over your eye. Many patients have their migraines triggered by perfumes or fragrances.

And it doesn't matter how severe or how long you've had your condition. We have sometimes gotten the best results with the worst cases.

Call 800-986-4868 for your free screening.

It's a shame to suffer one more minute than you might have to. Give us a call today. 800-986-4868.

NYC PAIN MD

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Brooklyn nonprofit gets $50K grant to help prevent sexual violence

Black Women's Blueprint aims to reach out to black men and boys about their role in rape culture.

KRISTIN TOUSSAINT
kristin.toussaint@metro.us

More than 60 percent of black women experience sexual violence or assault before they are 18 years old, according to the organization's research.
MAYBELLINE MCCOY

A Brooklyn nonprofit has a plan to end sexual violence for black women and girls, and a new grant is helping make that effort possible.

More than 60 percent of black women and girls experience some form of sexual violence or assault before the age of 18, according to a study by nonprofit Black Women's Blueprint.

"That's over half — and before the age of 18 means child sexual abuse," said Sevonna Brown, director of communications and gender-justice programming at Black Women's Blueprint. "We definitely support survivors where they are, but this is [also] something we want to prevent. We're doing a lot to consider how we can get ahead of and prevent that."

Black Women's Blueprint this week received a $50,000 grant from Raliance, a national collaborative focused on "ending sexual violence in one generation."

With that money, the nonprofit will expand its Emerging Sons project, which focuses on connecting with black men and boys, and their specific role in ending rape culture and sexual violence.

"We do a number of programs through art making, barbershop conversations, ending-child-sexual-abuse prevention programs," Brown said. "And a lot of community-based dialogue. We have conversations with fathers — and mothers — who want to teach their sons consent culture."

Emerging Sons also goes into schools, from elementary schools up to college campuses, to have conversations around sexual violence with men of all ages.

Especially in the time of #MeToo, it's important to have these tough conversations with everyone — not just those who have experienced assault, activists say.

> **"We have conversations with fathers — and mothers — who want to teach their sons consent culture."**
>
> Sevonna Brown

To Raliance, which brings together three large nonprofits (the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center and the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault) it's about getting everyone involved.

"We have to stop looking at the survivor to be responsible for stopping the victimization," said Julie Patrick, Raliance national partners liaison. "It's on all of us to look out for each other."

Raliance began issuing grants to nonprofits focused on ending sexual violence in 2016. It was kicked off with seed funding from the National Football League, and these grants come from private funding.

Black Women's Blueprint is one of 11 organizations that received a total of $515,000 this week, and among those chosen, it stands out for its focus on prevention.

"They're trying to address a population of young men who could be as risk to cause harm, and definitely wanting to intervene before that ever happens," Patrick said.

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What is the Vero app and will it kill Facebook?

Vero, a social-media app that was introduced in 2015, has gained popularity in recent weeks. If you're wondering what it is and why is everyone talking about it, or if it will replace other popular networks, we can help.

What is Vero?
Vero, or its full name Vero – True Social, is a social app that is similar to apps such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. It allows users to share pictures, videos and text like some of the more popular apps, but without being bombarded with advertisements and the effects of algorithms.

One reasons Vero is becoming popular is because there are no algorithms in it. One of the biggest frustrations people have with Facebook and Instagram is not being able to see posts in chronological order.

The Vero app is currently ranked as the second top free app in Apple App Store. VERO

"The feed is composed of your posts and the posts of people you're either connected with or people you follow," according to Vero. "We don't curate it, manipulate it, insert advertising in it or hold back posts. You see what has been shared with you when it's been shared with you." It adds that users will not be able to pay to "boost" their posts to increase visibility.

The app will allow you to place the people you connect with into tiers: close friends, friends and acquaintances.

Is Vero?
Because Vero promises to be ad-free and make the subscribers its primary focus, you might be wondering how the app will make money.

It'll still need to make money to survive, though, and it has a simple solution: Vero is subscription-based app. According to the company, the first million people to join the app will get free Vero subscriptions for life. After that, new users will be charged "a few dollars" a year, according to CNBC. Vero hasn't released the cost of the annual subscription.

The app is free to download for Android and iOS. LENYON WHITAKER

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New tech will erase the lines between virtual and real worlds

Metro examines the technology that combines the best of VR and AR and has the potential to revolutionize many industries.

DANIEL CASILLAS, MWN
letters@metro.us

A user of AR glasses works on an industrial machine. ISTOCK

Augmented reality and virtual reality have become very popular in the last couple of years, with hundreds of companies developing devices and software for different applications.

However, a new technology could become much more trendy this year. It is called mixed reality.

Mixed reality (MR) or hybrid reality is the combination of VR and AR, which allows for the creation of spaces in which real and virtual objects and/or people interact.

It has already become trendy in the field of technology, and it could be used to create a whole new world with dozens of applications ranging from entertainment, workplaces, health care, even battlefield and military training.

The potential of this technology is so huge that Facebook, Google, Samsung, Sony, Nintendo, Huawei, Microsoft and others are working on it.

Experts agree that mixed reality could revolutionize some industries.

"It can have lots of applications. In manufacturing, mixed reality can provide workers with real-time assistance and therefore improve productivity and quality. in education, mixed reality can create immersive educational experiences for students of any age. Doctors can even get assistance thanks to mixed reality.

In communications, mixed reality can help people collaborate more efficiently. When shopping, mixed reality can provide customers with prices and product descriptions.

"The technology isn't only for fun — it can revolutionize many industries," Julia Tokareva, software development consultant at RubyGarage, explained to Metro.

Mixed reality could also change how people interact, especially in work environments.

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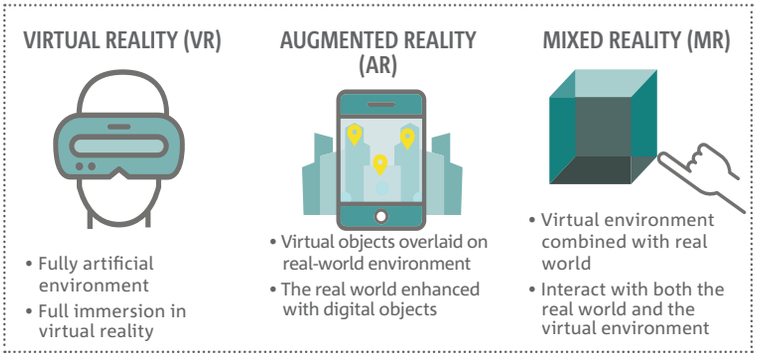
VIRTUAL REALITY (VR)
• Fully artificial environment
• Full immersion in virtual reality
AUGMENTED REALITY (AR)
• Virtual objects overlaid on real-world environment
• The real world enhanced with digital objects
MIXED REALITY (MR)
• Virtual environment combined with real world
• Interact with both the real world and the virtual environment

technology services and outsourcing company, issued a report on the benefits of mixed reality, highlighting its potential to change how people work, communicate and relate to the world.

The firm argues that as an immersive technology and the one requiring specialized hardware, considerations must be made for etiquette and socially acceptable uses of MR.

"How does a worker with a mixed-reality device interact with others around him? How do groups of people work together in mixed reality? How will social norms change to accommodate mixed reality holograms that can only be seen by some people?" Accenture asks in the research.

"This technology isn't only for fun — it can revolutionize many industries."

Julia Tokareva

However, like any new technology, MR faces challenges. According to Tokareva, the biggest are related to the hardware and software needed to run this type of technology.

On the one hand, mixed-reality requires headsets that are quite pricey, and there are few companies that develop specialized software. The nascent mixed-reality industry would have to overcome these challenges to grow and become more affordable.

Despite the fact that it is still too early to see the full potential of mixed reality, reports and specialists agree that it can become a disruptive and revolutionary agent.

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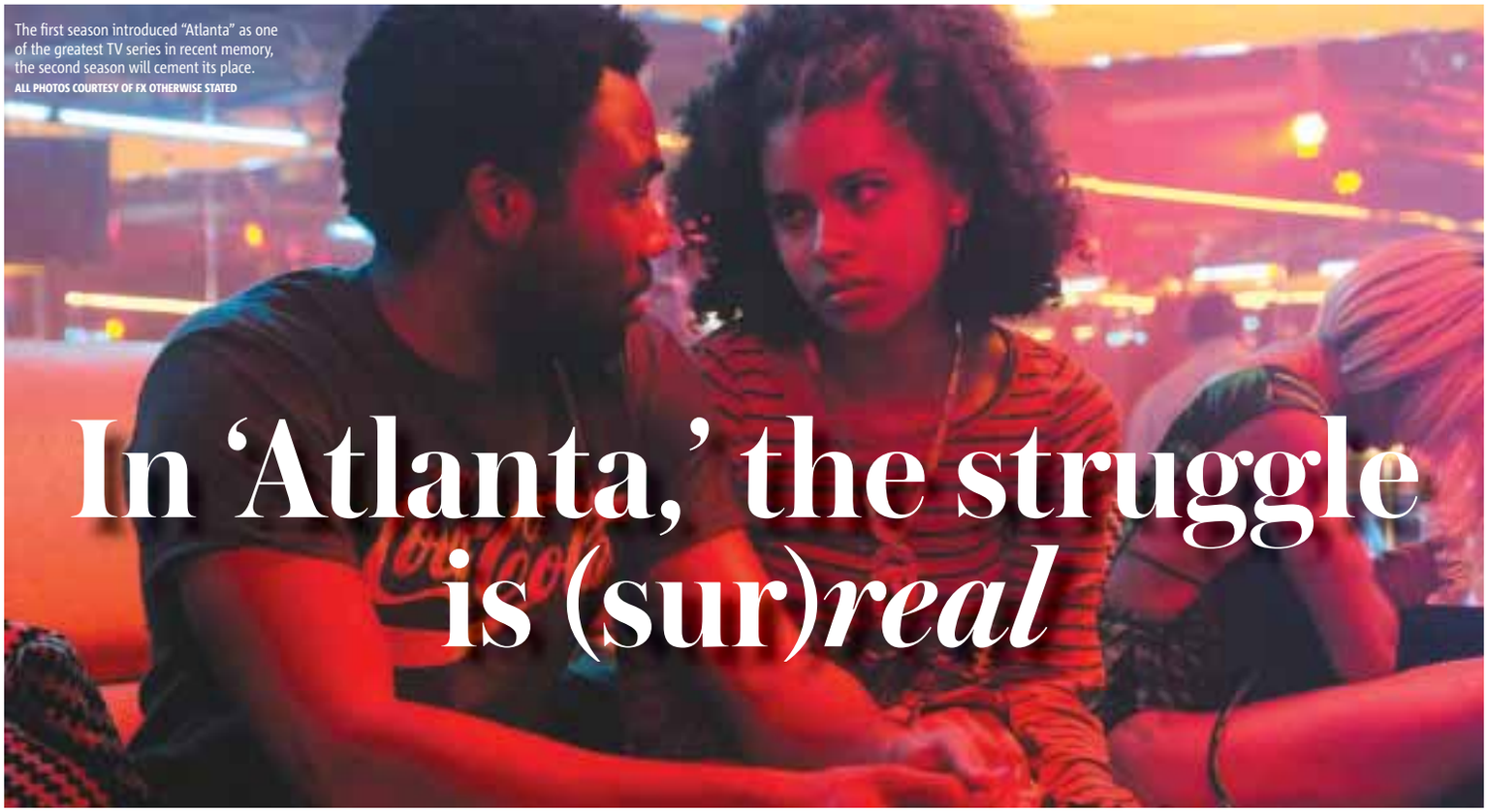

The first season introduced "Atlanta" as one of the greatest TV series in recent memory, the second season will cement its place.
ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF FX OTHERWISE STATED

In 'Atlanta,' the struggle is (sur)*real*

The series — and the current trend of critically adored black stories — is more than just a fad.

RACHAEL VAUGHAN CLEMMONS
rachael.clemmons@metro.us

The first three episodes of the second season of "Atlanta" — formally known as "Atlanta Robbin' Season," for the spike in armed robberies before Christmas — are laced with a palpable excitement. Creator, writer and star Donald Glover has, with the help his co-stars and co-writers, honed a rare and unique voice for this rare and unique series. It's incredibly special. There's a fine precision evident in every scene and it lets the show seesaw from wacky, fantastical gags played for laughs to authentic musings about poverty, racism and social media. The struggle is real — but it's surreal, too.

It would be easy then to throw "Atlanta" in with what appears to be a trend of the mainstream accepting and loving stories that focus on black lives from the perspective of the black people living them. It would be even easier to boast that black popular culture is having a moment right now, with the recent influx of critically adored fare like "Black Panther," "Insecure" and "Get Out."

But the word "moment" suggests that this time is fleeting.

"I don't want anything to be a moment," Brian Tyree Henry (aka Paper Boi) told The New York Times in an interview with the rest of the cast. "I want to be here and have our place in the pantheon. Avenues are finally open."

Open indeed. Thanks to the current state of peak TV, stories have gotten more interesting, less prosaic. And "Atlanta" is a series that goes above and beyond, setting itself apart from its peers and seamlessly blending the real and the fantastical. Case in point? In the premiere tonight, we meet Earn's uncle who keeps a golden pistol under his bed and a pet alligator in the spare room. No big.

"The word 'moment' suggests that this time is fleeting."

It is weirder and bigger than many series before it, black-led or otherwise. And that it's a bona fide hit confirms what we've been saying all along: We want more of this. We want original stories from different perspectives. Give us more "Atlanta," and less reboots ("Roseanne," looking at you because, come on).

It's more than a trend. It's a long awaited shift. There have always been excellent stories about black people. As a person whose childhood was filled with soundtracks to every Whitney Houston starring vehicle — "The Bodyguard" and "Waiting to Exhale" remain favorites, 20-odd years later — plus constant viewings of films like "Boomerang" and series like "Living Single," I can attest that this isn't new. Perhaps what's new is the critics paying attention — and the powers that be finally acquiescing to giving the people what they want.

And thank Dumbledore. "Our job is to make great things and happen to be black," Glover said in the same New York Times interview. "That's it."

With "Atlanta," he's done that. And then some.

"Atlanta Robbin' Season" premieres tonight on FX at 10 p.m.

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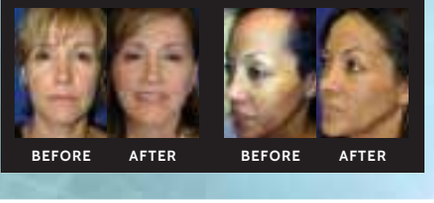

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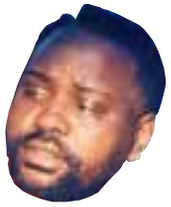
Welcome to "Atlanta"

"Atlanta" tells the story of two cousins working in the Atlanta music scene, striving toward a better life for themselves and their families.

There's Earn (Donald Glover) a Princeton-dropout-come-young-manager trying his best to make things happen for his rapper cousin Paper Boi.



Paperboi — real name Alfred (Brian Tyree Henry) — might have tasted the first morsels of success, but he's learning the game isn't all it's cracked up to be.

Meanwhile, Darius (Lakeith Stanfield), Paper Boi's fascinating, ever-present sidekick, is always nearby, offering otherworldly commentary and frankly? Bold fashion choices.

And then there's Van (Zazie Beetz) — Earn's best friend, the mother of his child, and the series very well-coiffed straight man.

GETTY IMAGES

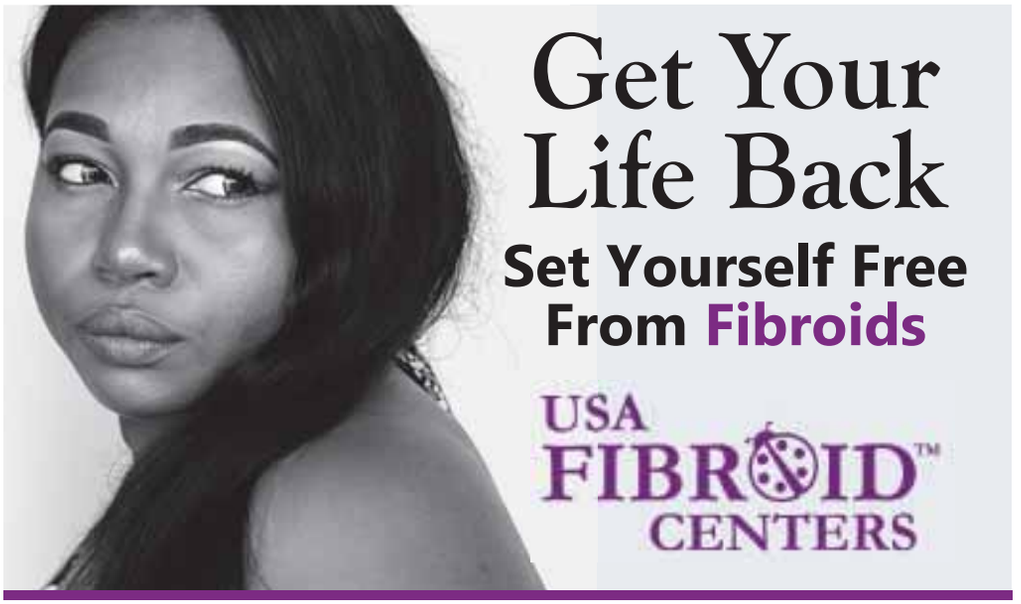
About the title "Robbin' Season."

Wondering why, exactly, this season is called "Atlanta Robbin' Season"? You're not alone. Thankfully, Donald Glover and executive producer and writer Stephen Glover (yes, they're brothers) have an explanation.

First things first: Robbin' season refers to an actual time period in Atlanta before Christmas, where robberies increase exponentially. "People have gifts, have more stuff, and money," Stephen said at a Television Critics Association panel in January. "You might get your package stolen off your front porch. ... It's a very tense and desperate time."

Donald added, "Are you gonna eat or be eaten? I think that's something people don't realize. Black people have to make a choice. That choice defines who you are."

In the second season, Earn and Paper Boi face the weird world of low-level success in the social media age.



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The high price of *insta-fame*

Actress Michelle Monaghan on her new film, "The Vanishing Of Sidney Hall."

GREGORY WAKEMAN
Gregory.Wakeman@metro.us

With the 24-hour news cycle, the rise of social media and the constant prying eyes of the paparazzi, it has never been harder to be a celebrity, as they're now attacked and over-analyzed from all angles seemingly every minute of every day.

While "The Vanishing of Sidney Hall" doesn't explicitly examine modern celebrity culture, it does focus on the impact of sudden success and the unyielding pressure that comes with being in the public eye. Especially when it happens to someone so young.

Michelle Monaghan stars as Sidney Hall's mother in the mystery, which is set over three time periods and focuses on the character writing a novel at 18, the aftermath of its huge success when he is 24 and then his disappearance at 30. We chatted with Monaghan about the film, the impact of instant fame and why distributor A24 is so important.

What first attracted you to "The Vanishing of Sidney Hall"?
Obviously the writing was so strong. It was such an original story and very unique in the way it is told, in its use of flashbacks and how the story and all the characters are all revealed. It is very serious and compelling and heartbreaking in that way. That made it very special. The role was unlike anything I have ever done before. And I loved the chance to work with Logan. He such a great young actor, and is committed to his craft and to this story.

Did you enjoy playing such a cruel character?
On paper she seems very cruel, and she is cruel. I also hope there is an element where you understand her. I latched onto the idea that she didn't emotionally evolve beyond that point. Most people grow into the idea of becoming a mom. You get the feelings of being maternal, but she just seemed to miss that step. She seems to have acquired a sense of arrested development.

Monaghan stars opposite Logan Lerman in the mystery drama. A24

GETTY IMAGES

"People have always been enthralled by the idea of something being new, especially when it is made by somebody so young."

Does the depiction of Sidney Hall and his instant fame feel timely?
People have always been enthralled by the idea of something being new, especially when it is made by somebody so young. They then put people on pedestals. More so now though it is fleeting, and these moments in the spotlight come and go so quickly. So for someone who has success at a very young age it would be hard to navigate such an avalanche of adulation and success, especially when it is taken away so quickly.

Talk about working with A24 on the film, they seem like the last bastion of independent cinema.
I definitely tip my hat to A24. It is so important for any distribution company, or any writers, directors, actors, producers to support independent films. Especially because sadly I think they are a bit of a dying breed. They know that there are very different ways for people to view films.

So you have to marry these two worlds, and know who your audience is, and how they want to watch films. They've been able to find that balance in a really smart way, and produce an extraordinary slate of movies.

"The Vanishing Of Sidney Hall" will be released into select cinemas on March 2, and is already exclusively available on Direct TV.

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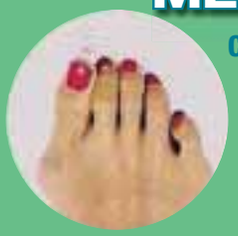

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The New York International Children's Film Festival isn't just for kids

Lu Over The Wall is screening on March 4 and March 10. GKIDS

Liyana is screening on March 11. AARON KOPP AND AMANDA KOPP

The 2018 NYICFF will host more than 100 films from over 30 countries. FABLE STUDIO

The progressive festival runs through March 18.

GREGORY WAKEMAN
Gregory.Wakeman@metro.us

No doubt some lazy simpletons will dismiss the New York International Children's Film Festival as an event adults have to endure for the sake of their offspring rather than enjoy themselves. But anyone who has seen an animated film in recent years will know that the very best of the genre often appeals to adults and children alike.

Since its launch in 1997, the New York Int'l Children's Film Festival has been the go-to event for Big Apple dwellers who want to share the wonders of celluloid with their kids. This year, it will showcase more than 100 animated, live action, documentary and experimental shorts and features from around 30 countries.

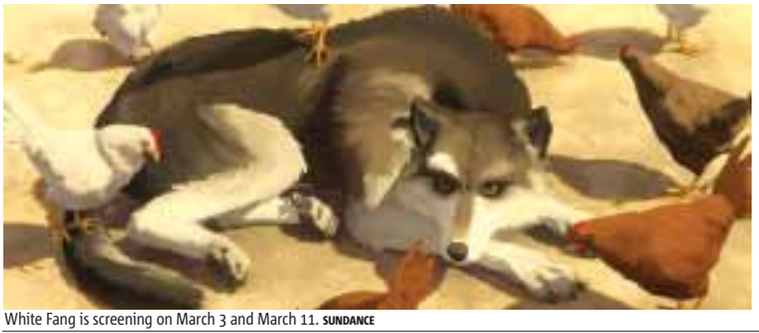
But while the New York International Children's Film Festival's 15 feature films, nine short film series and its first virtual-reality minifest are all worth celebrating, it is the specific programs and events that really highlight the progression, inclusion and importance of the extravaganza.

Once again the New York International Children's Film Festival will host Girls POV, a series of short films that are shown from the perspective of female preteens and teenagers.

This year will also see the debut of Boys Beyond Boundaries, which features one movie about a boy covertly cross-dressing and another about the only male participant in a baton-twirling contest.

The festival will culminate with a series of awards, the winners of which will be decided by a panel of professionals that includes Sofia Coppola and Gus Van Sant, while the Virtual Reality Jr. experience places players in the likes of "Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them" and "Wolves in the Walls."

There's plenty more to experience at the New York International Children's Film Festival, too — and you have until March 18 to do it.



White Fang is screening on March 3 and March 11. SUNDANCE

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March into Spring

Smorgasburg at East River State Park returns March 31. **PHOTOS PROVIDED UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE**

We've got your guide to the biggest events of the month as we prepare to send off winter and welcome the season of flowers, films and festivals.

EVA KIS
eva.kis@metro.us

Sumo + Sushi

Three champion sumo wrestlers will show off the history and skills of their sport at the Playstation Theater while you dine on a Japanese bento box dinner during the first-ever Sumo + Sushi. Every ticket is a ringside seat for this unique affair, where a daring few will even get in the ring with the pros. ***March 3-4***

Orchid Show

The New York Botanical Garden's annual Orchid Show returns the first weekend of March, with the flower extravaganza taking a fine art angle this year. Danish flower artisan Daniel Ost has created a series of "living sculptures" to fit into the environment of the garden's main Victorian-style Enid A. Haupt Conservatory. On Orchid Nights, enjoy the flowers with live performances, dining and drinks. ***March 3-April 22***

Drone Film Festival

Getting a camera up in the air used to be only in the budget of the biggest movies, but drones have fulfilled the dreams of aspiring filmmakers around the world. The New York City Drone Film Festival — the first event of its kind when it debuted in 2014 — brings together enthusiasts and pros for two days of panels, screenings, production classes and more. ***March 3-4***

The 90th Annual Academy Awards

The final (and largest) showdown for 2017 movie glory, the Oscars, goes down the first weekend of March. Will it be Jordan Peele's masterpiece thriller about race Get Out or Guillermo del Toro's woman-fish love story The Shape of Water that win the night? It's been a wild year for movies, so you'll want to get to one of the viewing parties around the city to watch it with a good crowd. ***March 4***

Slate's Culture Gabfest

To celebrate its 10th anniversary, Slate's Culture Gabfest is hosting a live show at Brooklyn's The Bell House. Watch hosts Stephen Metcalf, Dana Stevens and Julia Turner shine a lens on the world of entertainment with their witty, rigorous and insightful analysis. ***March 7***

Winter Wine Festival

After huddling inside for three months, we're sure you'll appreciate strolling through a vineyard. The Winter Wine Festival transforms the PlayStation Theater into an indoor land of grapevines, with dozens of vintages from around the world for pairing with savory and sweet nibbles, with live jazz music to set the mood. ***March 10***

Coffee & Tea Festival

Caffeine lovers, mark your calendars for the biggest weekend of your year: the Coffee & Tea Festival, back for a 13th year of everything from java to matcha. More than 100 exhibitors from around the world gather at the Brooklyn Expo Center to show off the latest coffee- and tea-brewing tech (and, of course, offer tastings), baristas hold seminars and food vendors will help settle your jitters. Serious fans have a new VIP ticket ($35) that allows two extra hours of tasting and comes with a goodie bag, $10 and up, ***March 10-11***

Asia Week New York

Asian art and culture take the spotlight during the annual Asia Week New York with museums, cultural societies and galleries around the city staging limited-time exhibitions, showing rare pieces of their collections and holding talks and demonstrations all about Asian arts. Highlights include the opening of the Divine Feminine showcase of Nepalese art at Tibet House and a talk on real and imagined landscapes at the Met. ***March 15-24***

Queens World Film Festival

Organized by theme, the annual Queens World Film Festival always manages to put its finger on the pulse of what we're thinking about here in New York and Beyond. There's no better chance to catch a glimpse into the strange and wonderful experience of being human, whether it's the short films series about young LGBTQ adults' com-

things to do

"Ava" at New Directors/New Films. GRASSHOPPER FILM

ing out stories or the anxieties of real and metaphorical revolving doors. ***March 15-25***

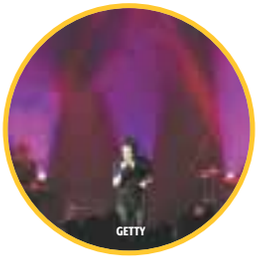
GETTY

St. Patrick's Day

The luck o' the Irish smiles on us all again when St. Patrick's Day comes round this month (and on a Saturday to boot!). While traditionally the holiday marks the death of the patron saint of Ireland with a day of cultural celebrations, it's more commonly known as the day to eat, drink and wear green things — just remember to be cool when you bring the craic. ***March 17***

Holi in the City

The Indian festival of colors Holi is a chance to rejoice at the end of winter (well, almost) and welcome spring by painting everyone and everything with rainbow-colored powders. Wear white to take part in the festival during two daytime parties at the four-level club Stage48's Holi in the City on March 17 and March 31 when revelers will be doused in colorful powders while enjoying food and drinks on the rooftop lounge. ***Must be 21+, $35-$50, Noon-7 p.m.***



GETTY

Rocktopia

With Bruce Springsteen packing in full houses nightly on Broadway, expect to see more music-driven ideas in traditional theaters. Rocktopia at the Broadway Theatre promises to be an intriguing melding of genres: a full classical orchestra and choir will back a rock band and pop/rock singers including Pat Monahan of Train to merge their two musical worlds into a new kind of anthemic genre. ***March 20-April 29***

Dine in Brooklyn

Brooklyn's own Restaurant Week is a great excuse to find some deep cuts in the borough's hotter than ever restaurant scene. At $28 for three-course prix fixe dinners, $15 two-course lunches and $12 weekend brunch, the prices during Dine in Brooklyn are much better than the broader NYC Restaurant Week, with dozens of options throughout the borough. ***March 20-30***

Affordable Art Fair

Start your art collection by getting in on the ground floor with up-and-coming artists at the Affordable Art Fair, going on at the Metropolitan Pavilion. Over 300 contemporary artists, both new and established names, are represented at this casual, approachable event featuring everything from watercolors to lithographs, etchings and screen prints. Prices range from $100 to $10,000. ***March 21-25***

ISTOCK

Architectural Digest Design Show

Spring cleaning got you thinking about refreshing your space? For four days, 400 brands take over Piers 92 and 94 in Chelsea during the 17th annual Architectural Digest Design Show. Their dozens of fully furnished "vignettes" display the latest in kitchen, bath, bed and living room designs from indie makers and established names, plus chats with designers, cooking demos and more. ***March 22-25***

ISTOCK

Macy's Flower Show

For two weeks only, the glittering halls of Macy's Herald Square become display cases for blooms from around the world (along with bouquets of on-theme merchandise) during the Macy's Flower Show. This year's theme is Once Upon a Springtime, with tons of fairytale displays (last year, they put a functioning Ferris wheel in the store!) and many more surprises. ***March 25-April 8***

New Directors/New Films 2018

Hollywood is starting to put the reins of big movies in the hands of women and non-white filmmakers, with amazing results like Black Panther and I, Tonya. New Directors/New Films has been highlighting the work of emerging creatives from around the world for 47 years, curated by the Museum of Modern Art and the Film Society of Lincoln Center. The festival is split between the two venues, with 35 films over the festival's 12 days. ***March 28-April 8***

The return of Smorgasburg

As sure a sign of spring as new blossoms and tank tops is the return of Smorgasburg to the great outdoors of Brooklyn. Smorgasburg Williamsburg will reopen at East River State Park on Saturdays starting March 31, while Smorgasburg in Prospect Park breezes back onto Breeze Hill on April 1.

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The ins and outs of The Old Smoke.
ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

London in a *snap*

A weekend in Europe is as amazing as it is achievable.

RICHARD SILVERSTEIN
letters@metro.us

London: nearly as close as the West Coast, steeped in history, romantic and rustic and with Brexit around the corner, the American dollar's going gangbusters. So why not consider a weekend away?

A nonstop overnight flight's the only obstacle, but will allow you to wake up to a wonderful playground that'll satiate your inner history buff, glam-scene peeper and general wanderlust. An evening return flight will get you home with enough time for a full night's sleep before hitting the office again Monday morning (thank you, time zones!).

Getting around

If you weren't already a fan of oysters, now's the time. An "Oyster Card" is the tap-on/tap-off payment system for the tube, which will get you everywhere you need to go. They're available at a small cost and you can top them up as necessary. Black cabs, though traditional and fancy-feeling, will set you back a pretty pile of pounds, so save those for a special outing. Also consider the Heathrow Express, a train that links your likely airport to the center of town (and is so tidy and swift your trip's start and end will be very impressive).

Gotta see

You'll no doubt want to have a wander near Buckingham Palace, the Tower of London and grab a selfie in front of Big Ben, but do allow some time for an exhibition at the Tate Modern for a bit of fresh culture after you've visited the staid standouts. You can journey there on the Thames by taking the Tate Boat, which connects the Modern and the Britain museums.

Eats and outs

The culinary scene in London is overwhelming, ranging from nook-and-cranny mum-and-pop shops to the finest dining imaginable. If it's your first time in town, trust the crowds at gastropubs, which abound. Go for a British staple like a meat pie with mushy peas. And when your thirst gets the better of you and a room-temp ale just won't do, visit Mr. Fogg's — an awesome ye-olde-worldy cocktail bar with modern concoctions that'll knock your socks off.

Shop stop

You don't need to be a retail obsessive to enjoy a stroll through Portobello Market. The world's largest antique market is also home to all sorts of noshes and knick knacks. No "my friend went to London and all I got was this lousy t-shirt" for your family — you'll be fed well as you duck in and out of different shops and stalls.

Tea for tots

High tea at a fancy hotel is an institution in London. There are at least a dozen "Downton"-esque destinations that offer a $50ish spread that'll make your morning joe routine look absolutely barbaric. If you've brought the kids along, be sure to hit up The Ampersand — inspired by its neighbor, The Science Museum, it puts on an extravagant, not-at-all stuffy, kid-friendly afternoon experience where you'll encounter dino-themed treats and test tube toppings for the scone of a lifetime.

Game for a selfie? Find yourself a bobby.

Leafy wander

London may have a bad reputation when it comes to the weather, but it's not at all deserved. And on a sunny summer's day, Hampstead Heath is the place to play. There are public pools, twilight concerts and you'll enjoy the park's prime position as one of the highest vantage points in town. While you're there, pop by The Garden Gate, an atmospheric pub with an inviting outdoor beer garden.

Keep calm and carry on (longer?)

If you've got an additional day, you're spoiled for choice when it comes to day tripping. Brighton is London's seaside getaway about an hour away. Not for salty breezes? How about a Bath? The enchanting small town is only about an hour-and-a-half away. Windsor Castle and Stonehenge are also options worth considering. So really, even though you can, why go for *only* a weekend?

Tower Bridge is one of the city's must-see landmarks.

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Live like royalty

Indulge your inner princess or prince and get thee to Ashford Castle.

Fodor's Travel

Ashford Castle underwent a recent renovation for all the modern comforts in an old-school setting. ALL PHOTOS PROVIDED

Being born into a royal family isn't the only way to experience castle living. While the bad old medieval times are behind us, spending a few days at the stunning Ashford Castle on the Galway-Mayo border will help you realize just why it's good to be the king/queen.

Even if you're not the glass-slipper type, an amazing few days of luxury, history, charm and adventure will do anyone a world of good.

A fairytale setting

Netflix's "The Crown" plus a bad case of Meghan Markle envy means everybody wants to stay in a castle.. And why not? If you're going to stay in a castle, it should look, feel and be majestic, and Ireland's Ashford Castle ticks all these boxes.

The royal spa

Lording over the charming little village of Cong on the Mayo-Galway border and set on 350 stunning acres hugging the shores of Lough Corrib, Ashford Castle is consistently, and justifiably, ranked one of the world's best hotels. A 13th century Anglo-Norman stronghold turned luxury hotel (and in between, a home to the Guinness family), Ashford was restored to its full historic splendor with a complete $75 million overhaul in 2015.

Along with all necessary updates, the careful restoration brought exquisite new rooms, luxurious bathrooms, enhanced public spaces, elegant dining rooms, a new spa, a plush 32-seat cinema and more.

Castle feels

Sure, landscaped grounds, sweeping staircases, a moat and turreted towers all provide the required Instagram backdrops to let everyone know that you are staying in a castle, but it's the quiet efficiency, attention to every detail, and obvious sense of pride and care at every turn at Ashford Castle that makes you feel like you are staying in a castle. Add a staff that could be character actors for Irish wit, hospitality, and charm and you know you are staying in an Irish castle.

Keep your head in the clouds

In the good old days, a queen could just off someone's head for kicks, but these days we have less messy ways to get an adrenaline rush, and you'll find plentiful outlets on the grounds of Ashford Castle. Forget taking tea all day (not that we'd judge), the modern queen takes advantage of onsite activities ranging from falconry, horseback riding, golf, and cycling, to fishing, boating, clay-shooting, and archery.

A great way to keep your head above the commoners is the onsite zip line course, which allows a bird's eye view of the castle as you zip through the woods. And if you enjoy hanging out on the treetops, challenge yourself to a tree-climbing exercise with the tallest tree-climb in Ireland, a 164-foot tree planted in the late 1800s by the Guinness family.

Walk a hawk

Did you know that while you might initially squirm at the sight of fresh dead mice, you will be plucking them like pretty flowers when you realize it makes a magnificent bird cut across the sky and swoop down to your gloved fist? Ashford Castle's School of Falconry is the oldest Falconry school in Ireland and the private one-hour woodland walk with a harris hawk, either on your wrist or following closely and coming to you on command, is a truly enchanting experience.

Summon the hounds

Hollywood princesses might prop ornamental pooches in their Chanel purses, but queens prefer the company of formidable Irish wolfhounds. Ashford Castle is home to two gentle giants, Cronan and Garvan, and the two noble brothers make a daily appearance in the castle from 10-11 a.m. Guests get to meet and play with the dogs and take pictures.

Early risers can accompany these magnificent creatures on a morning woodland walk (rain boots and coats are provided by the castle); just meet at reception at 8.30 a.m.

It's good to be the queen

A spa treatment, or spa day, is essential to a restful escape and Ashford Castle's lavish spa and indoor pool offers luxury and facilities with stunning views of Lough Corrib. Decorated in calming grays, creams and greens, the spa boasts a stunning indoor relaxation pool housed in a bronze conservatory, complete with seashell chandeliers and a Tree of Life mosaic.

Treatment options include hot stone massage, aroma and marine therapy, regenerating facials, detoxifying wraps, and pampering beauty treatments, as well as a variety of Hammam sessions and other wellness treatments.

Getting here

If your vacation budget is not exactly like a queen's, Norwegian Airlines has made Ireland a hub and will get you there with scratch left to splurge on accommodations.

Norwegian offers flights to Shannon, Dublin, and Cork airports in Ireland from Newburgh, New York and Providence, Rhode Island.

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DeGrom eyeing Opening Day return

One of the Mets aces has been dealing with lower-back stiffness, putting his first week of the regular season in jeopardy.

JOE PANTORNO
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Even with Ray Ramirez out of the picture, the New York Mets were welcomed to the 2018 season with the injury bug once again being a steady presence in the clubhouse. And it looks like it might claim the very beginning of the season for one of their pitchers, Jacob deGrom.

On Tuesday, Mets manager Mickey Callaway made it known that deGrom might not be ready for his first start of the regular season after being sidelined with lower-back stiffness this week.

He's just the latest Met to be featured on an injury report that already contains Yoenis Cespedes (sore right shoulder), new reliever Anthony Swarzak (left calf), Dominic Smith (strained quad) and Juan Lagares (hamstring). Jay Bruce has also been dealing with plantar fasciitis but has been able to take part in early spring training games.

On Wednesday morning, deGrom updated the media on his status, which didn't necessarily clear things up.

"Definitely want to be ready for [the first start of the year," deGrom said. "I think the thing is to be smart, though. If I wasn't ready the first week or so and then healthy for the rest of the year, then that's what it has to be."

DeGrom hasn't had much of a chance to get in a groove with the team down in Port St. Lucie, Florida, during spring training. The team pushed him back a few days so he could attend the birth of his daughter, Aniston Grace, on Feb. 22.

Jacob deGrom might not be ready for the opening week of the 2018 season as he's dealing with lower-back stifness during spring training. GETTY IMAGES

Upon his return, deGrom reported feeling the stiffness in his back while playing catch.

He has since thrown off a mound, in which he said he felt "great" with no issues, a promising sign. The next step for him would be to throw a bullpen session as he continues to set his sights on getting back before the season begins.

"I think if things keep going smooth, I don't think there's a reason that I shouldn't be ramped up enough," deGrom said. "I think if everything goes as planned, I should be able to get ready."

Alongside Noah Syndergaard, deGrom was one of the favorites to start Opening Day on March 31. This latest turn of events would likely make Thor, who looked solid in his spring training debut on Monday, the ceremonial first starter of the year.

Healthy Judge debuts with Stanton, Sanchez in lineup

The New York Yankees gave Major League Baseball an early look at what their full-strength lineup could look like come the 2018 regular season on Wednesday in an exhibition matchup with the Detroit Tigers.

Returning from shoulder surgery he underwent in November, Aaron Judge slotted into the No. 2 spot in the Yankees lineup followed by newly-acquired Giancarlo Stanton and catcher Gary Sanchez.

Judge, last year's American League home-run champion and Rookie of the Year, went 0-for-2 with a strikeout in his spring debut. He lined his second at-bat down the third-base line, but it was snagged by a sliding Jeimer Candelario before making the long throw to first to get Judge in time.

In contrast, Stanton collected a pair of hits with a bloop single and a double, his second at-bat of the day exhibiting just how powerful he is. The reigning National League MVP went down to get a pitch low and outside and took it the other way, hammering the right-center field wall with a rocket of a line drive.

Aaron Judge (left) and Giancarlo Stanton (right) were featured in the Yankees lineup together for thef irst time on Wednesday. GETTY IMAGES

He narrowly missed a home run in the sixth, sending a deep fly to center field, but he didn't get enough of it.

Sanchez provided the big highlight of the day, launching a monster two-run home run over the scoreboard in left-center field during the first inning shortly after Stanton's two-strike single.

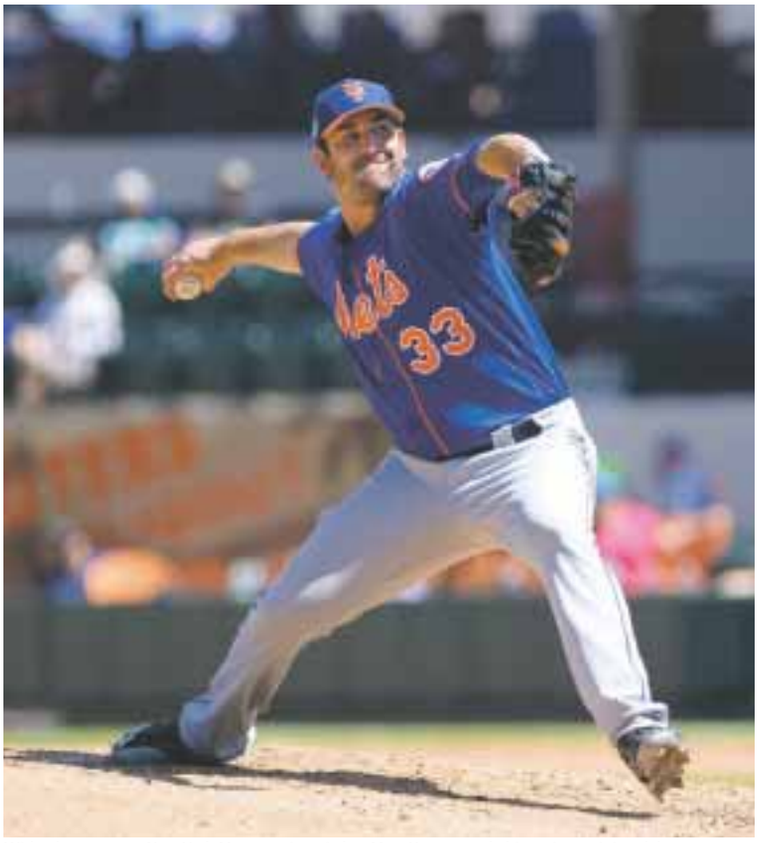
But all eyes were on Judge after his abbreviated outing.

"Felt great, felt like Opening Day," Judge said. "You just see how the eyes work today and how the swing is feeling, how the body's feeling. ... It was a good first day."

As for the shoulder?

"I don't feel anything," he said. "That's the kind of progress we wanted." JOE PANTORNO

Harvey makes first spring start



With a lot to prove, New York Mets starting pitcher Matt Harvey made his spring training debut on Wednesday against the Atlanta Braves. After a horrid 2017 campaign, the "Dark Knight" looked decent, allowing one run on two hits in two innings with a pair of strikeouts. His fastball topped out at 96 miles per hour while exhibiting a solid slider that came in around 86 miles per hour. JOE PANTORNO

Draft blog from an NFL hopeful

Rutgers product and NFL prospect Kemoko Turay will share his journey to the pros in this exclusive blog.

KEMOKO TURAY
sports@metro.us

I can't wait to finally have some fufu in a couple of weeks. But first, I have to get through these next few weeks. Then I'll make time for some fufu.

This week, I head to the NFL combine in Indianapolis for what will be one of the biggest opportunities of my life. I've been training hard since January for this opportunity and I feel that this is a real blessing for me, a chance to build on the Senior Bowl a few weeks ago and now showcase my work ethic and abilities before all 32 NFL teams.

I have some lofty goals for the combine and some might say they are unrealistic but I know how hard I've been working for this. I haven't run a full 40-yard dash yet, the one event that everyone seems to get caught up with. But I've been doing a lot of increments, running for 10 yards, running for 20 yards.

There's a lot that goes into it. Staying low before gently rising up. It is form-intensive. That's why this training has been so important. It isn't just go out there and run it.

My trainers have been tough on me, helping me to focus on form. Now, muscle memory is kicking in.

At the combine, I think people will be impressed with some other workouts including the shuttle and three-cone drill. These workouts show not just quickness but agility and balance. As a defensive lineman, you have to show that in today's NFL.

Kemoko Turay is preparing for the 2018 NFL draft this spring. GETTY IMAGES

Coming from Rutgers, I think I have some questions to answer. Not everyone might have seen me play and our school wasn't as high profile as some. If they watch my tape, they'll see someone who can help in a variety of ways, who makes plays in the backfield and has done things on special teams.

I did get the chance to play against some great competition with Rutgers in the Big Ten. I know that will help when teams look into me some more. The conference definitely tests you as a player.

The combine is more than just workouts, though. The interview process is something that is really big.

My agent at Sportstars has set me up with a professional who has been mentoring me through the interview process. It has been really helpful to fill out sample questionnaires and to be able to learn how to handle certain questions.

I want to be open and really honest throughout the whole process as this is an opportunity for teams to learn about me.

I trust my work ethic and the things that got me here.

Truthfully, it doesn't seem like it is real yet, that I'm a step away from the NFL. I've been so focused on training, on eating right and getting prepared that it hasn't quite hit me yet. Maybe when I touch down in Indianapolis it will become more real to me. I'm guessing, though, that it won't happen until I'm drafted.

I learned that at the combine, there is more to do than just the workouts and interviews. They have us set up with things like visiting a children's hospital. That excited me because I enjoy giving back to the community.

At Rutgers, we did a lot of things like that. I realized during my time there that giving back and sharing what I've been blessed with is an important part of the platform I've been given. We did a lot with the Special Olympics and interacting with kids and I've really developed an interest in helping others because of this exposure while at college.

Yes, the diet is still strict. Wednesday is a cheat day so I get to enjoy something like a hamburger but then it is back to salads, salads, more salads and for good measure, some vegetables. It's intense.

I still can't believe all the types of cabbage that are out there. Unreal.

After the combine, we have a Pro Day at Rutgers and I'm going to participate in that as well. I plan on doing all the events. That is on March 9, so that is another exciting showcase for me.

After that, I plan on having fufu. It is a cultural dish and my mother makes a great one. When she cooks, you can feel her love. She really puts her heart into it.

So look up fufu. You'll thank me for it.

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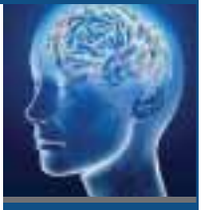

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Across

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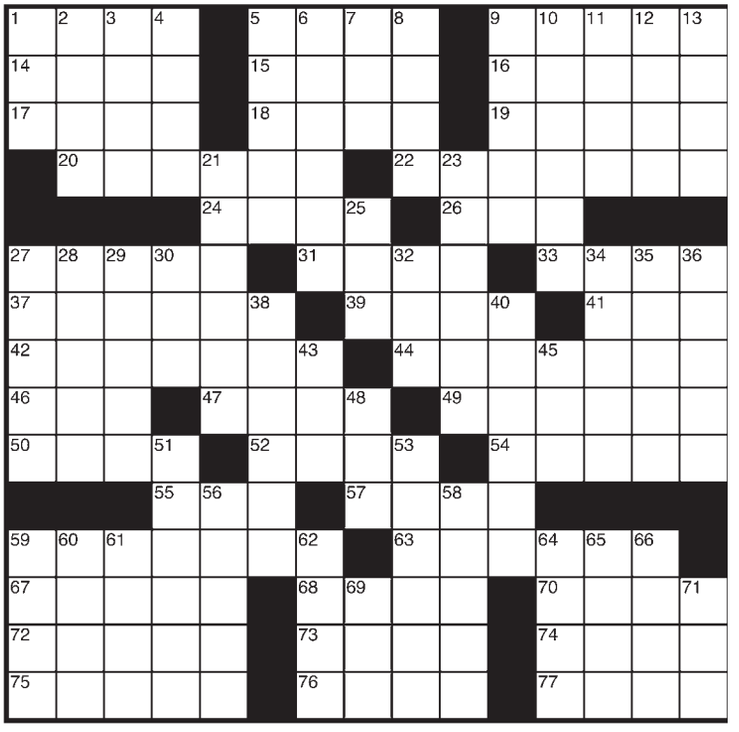
5 Language of Pakistan
9 Prima donnas
14 -- hygiene
15 Southwest art colony
16 Yawning
17 Words from Scrooge
18 Aha! (2 wds.)
19 Doctor's assistant
20 Laundry additive
22 Composted
24 Store window word
26 Kyoto cash
27 Watch
31 Long ago
33 Type of prof
37 Toughens up
39 Pharaoh's river
41 Sedan
42 Tennis gear
44 Public image
46 Mdse. bars
47 Baby buggy, in London
49 Speckled fishes
50 Recipe direction
52 Suit, for short
54 Host with a book club
55 Clean water org.
57 -- -do-well
59 Mummy locales
63 Spa
67 Lagoon boundary
68 Lascivious glance
70 Placed
72 Eating places
73 Kyrgyzstan mountains
74 Writer -- Rice
75 Window covering
76 Irascibility
77 Feudal estate

Down

1 Watch chain
2 UAE word
3 Arlene of old films
4 Besides 5 New York city
6 Without thought
7 Female deer
8 Not new
9 Prom, for one
10 Large lizard
11 Be different
12 Church alcove
13 Put in a lawn
21 Dreaming, maybe
23 Grommet
25 Years on end
27 Flu bug
28 Out of place
29 Handbag logo
30 Annoy
32 Tear
34 Look high and low
35 Man in red
36 Rubbish
38 Fishing spot
40 Foul-ups
43 Lisa Simpson's instr.
45 Sponge up
48 Some adults
51 Felt dizzy
53 Quick breakfast
56 Sign of life
58 Unearthly
59 Apple computers
60 Rocky Mountain state
61 Den piece
62 Marble block
64 Canute's foe
65 Jaipur princess
66 Fork part
69 O.T. judge
71 Phone button



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easy

					2		4	9
				1	5			2
9	5		8	3		6		
	1	9				7		
2								3
		8				1	5	
		4		9	6		1	5
5			4	7				
3	2		5					

hard

3				5			2	
	2	9	8		6			
4	1			3	9			
		4						2
7	5						1	6
6						3		
			5	4			3	9
			6		3	2	5	
	3			7				4

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries You can take action, but don't expect it to be smooth sailing. You'll face opposition, setbacks and stress. Be prepared to alter your course to ensure success.

Taurus Avoid joint financial ventures. What you do on your own will prove to be a better way to spend your time and money. Celebrate your success with someone you love.

Gemini Emotional matters will surface regarding partnership issues. Do your best to understand the motives behind what someone is asking of you.

Cancer Listen attentively and get along with the people you need on your side. Networking will give you the opportunity to convince others to listen to your plans.

Leo You'll be dancing to a different beat when it comes to work and getting things done. Don't underestimate someone trying to take control. Don't get angry, get moving.

Virgo The more you interact with others, the better. The information you are given and the related ideas that sprout will bring you closer to the people you enjoy working alongside.

Libra Take care of any matters pertaining to financial, medical or legal institutions before you move on to more enjoyable tasks. Protect your assets and personal documents.

Scorpio Your help will be valued and will lead to better relationships with your peers and employer. Embrace change and the chance to use your unique talents to get ahead.

Sagittarius You'll be caught in the middle if you meddle in other people's affairs. Keep your distance from anyone trying to lure you into something questionable.

Capricorn Reconnecting with someone from your past will let you revisit things you used to do. An opportunity that comes your way should be considered carefully.

Aquarius Listen attentively to others' viewpoints and consider every angle of a certain situation. Having a precise view will help you find a workable solution to a problem.

Pisces Listen to people's advice, but do what works best for you. Drawing from all sources of information will give you a well-rounded view of what's possible. **EUGENIA LAST**

Yesterday's answers

S	W	A	B		A	C	H	E		W	A	D	E	S
P	A	L	E		F	L	A	N		A	D	A	G	E
A	R	M	S		G	A	M	Y		S	O	L	A	R
	T	A	I	C	H	I		A	S	T	R	I	D	E
			D	R	A	M	A		L	E	I			
S	C	R	E	E	N		G	L	A	D	N	E	S	S
L	O	O	S	E		M	O	O	T		G	A	T	E
E	M	U		P	I	A	N	I	S	T		T	A	U
D	I	G	S		G	R	I	D		R	E	E	K	S
S	C	H	M	A	L	T	Z		G	E	N	R	E	S
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C	A	R	R	I	O	N		R	A	D	I	A	L	
A	L	E	T	A		A	T	E	N		T	W	I	G
S	O	B	E	R		P	I	T	T		L	E	V	I
H	E	A	D	Y		S	E	A	S		E	D	E	N

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